

**REPORT/RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
AND RECORD OF ACTION**

Revised Minutes
and New
Attachments

February 10, 2004

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FROM: **PETER HILLS**, Fire Chief/Fire Warden, San Bernardino County
Consolidated Fire District

SUBJECT: **SUBMISSION OF GRANT APPLICATION TO THE UNITED STATES FOREST
SERVICE FOR THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA DROUGHT ASSISTANCE
STATE FIRE ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM**

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Authorize the San Bernardino County Consolidated Fire District as the lead agency to submit a grant application for funding in the amount of \$6,773,378, with a 50 percent match of \$6,773,378, to the United States Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region Fire and Aviation Management Section for USDA Forest Service State Fire Assistance (SPCF) Program to be used for developing sustainable fuel barriers, defensible spaces and community protection zones on private lands in the mountain communities of the San Bernardino Mountains.
2. Adopt a resolution to authorize Peter R. Hills, Fire Chief/Fire Warden, and Denise L. Benson, Division Manager, Fire Department/Office of Emergency Services to act as the County's agents to conduct all negotiations, execute and submit all documents including, but not limited to, applications, award letters, agreements, and payment requests which may be necessary for the completion of the aforementioned project under the USDA Forest Service State Fire Assistance (SPCF) Grant Program.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: In November of 2003 the USDA Forest Service State Fire Assistance Program received \$11,500,000 of a \$20,000,000 Congressional appropriation introduced by Congressman Jerry Lewis. This grant, for fuel reduction efforts in San Bernardino, Riverside, San Diego and Los Angeles Counties, will assist local agencies with fire hazard mitigation and fuel reduction activities on non-Federal lands within the wildland-urban interface areas. Projects can include hazardous fuel reduction, information and education programs, as well as purchase of needed supplies and equipment to reduce the risk of losses due to wildland fires. San Bernardino County, using the same sharing formula of the original 2003 Tree Mortality Remediation Grant approved by the Board of Supervisors on April 8, 2003, is applying for \$6,773,378 (58.89%) of the fuel reduction funds.

The formula uses three factors: the percentage of state and local acreage affected by tree mortality in San Bernardino County, the percentage of the total population living in the area affected by tree mortality in San Bernardino County and the percent of improved parcels within San Bernardino County that are in the tree mortality area.

Record of Action of the Board of Supervisors

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**SUBMISSION OF GRANT APPLICATION TO THE UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE
FOR THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA DROUGHT ASSISTANCE STATE FIRE ASSISTANCE
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This application is for reestablishment of fuel barriers, defensible spaces and community protection zones; removal of dead and dangerous trees posing a threat to life and property within the various communities of the San Bernardino Mountains, and a public education program on fire hazard mitigation and fuel reduction. This grant continues tasks established in the Hazard Mitigation Grant of June of 2003 approved by the Board of Supervisors on April 8, 2003. The tasks are:

- **Task One – Tree Removal Services:** Task One continues the Block Coordination Program for tree and fuel removal, low and moderate-income financial assistance started in the original Tree Mortality Remediation Grant approved by the Board on April 8, 2003 and augmented by the Board of Supervisors, and expands to include creation of fuel barriers and community protection zones. Staff support expands tree and fuel removal activities with the addition of three (3.0) additional Block Coordinators and two (2.0) Tree Permit Inspectors.
- **Task Two – Slash and Debris Removal:** Task Two continues and expands the Slash and Debris removal portion of the Block Coordination Program with the addition of four (4.0) slash crewmembers, acquisition of necessary vehicles and equipment for the slash crew, and continuation of the slash transportation program. Task Two also expands evacuation route clearing along County-maintained roads with the addition of one (1.0) supervisor, (5.0) five crew members and equipment to the Transportation Department to expand support of the CDF hand crews in establishing defensible zones along evacuation routes, and the Block Coordination Program slash crews when needed. Removal of slash generated by the Block Coordination Program expands to include slash removed along evacuation routes.
- **Task Three – Waste Management Services:** Task Three funds have been included in Task One under Tree and Fuels Removal.
- **Task Four – Long Term Control (Bark Beetle Study):** Task Four is not included in this grant but continues through the contract Forester, the Office of the Fire Marshal and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.
- **Task Five - Public Education and Program Support:** Task Five continues the current Public Education Specialist and public education literature and expands to include additional public education and outreach efforts. Program Support continues with the Staff Analyst II position currently funded as a match for the original grant. In addition, 1.0 Staff Analyst I is added to research additional funding opportunities and to assist in the increased program efforts of Tasks One and Two. One half (.5) of an Emergency Services Officer is funded to continue activities that the Emergency Services Officer is performing relating to Bark Beetle Tree Mortality, MAST, and OES coordination. The grant project targets the communities of the San Bernardino Mountains and is for a two-year period.

The attached application includes a program narrative and budget detail worksheets defining all proposed staffing, purchases, and distributions within the State Fire Assistance (SPCF) Program Area.

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This application is being submitted simultaneously with the Department of Economic and Community Development's application for grant funding under the USDA Forest Service Southern California Drought Assistance Funds Rural Development Program.

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The deadline for grant submittals is February 17, 2004, with an anticipated award date of April 15, 2004. If the grant is awarded, County Fire will bring an item to the Board to accept the grant and make related budget adjustments as necessary.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL BY OTHERS: This item has been reviewed by County Counsel (Deputy Dennis Tilton 387-5246) on February 3, 2004, and the County Administrative Office, (Wayne Thies, Administrative Analyst 387-5409) on February 3, 2004.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: The amount of the grant is \$6,773,378 to be received over a two year period, and has a required 50 percent match of \$6,773,378. The matching requirement can be satisfied in the form of cash or in-kind contributions. Matching funds are available as a soft match from non-federal government agencies, utilities and private property owner tree removal activities. Sufficient match will be available through in-kind funds to fully meet the 50 percent match. The grant covers personnel, equipment costs, training, and planning/administrative costs, and provides for flexibility in the use of funding within the identified tasks. There is no fiscal impact to the County.

SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS: First, Second and Third

PRESENTERS: Peter R. Hills, (909) 387-5974, and Denise L. Benson, (909) 356-3998.

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